

Application No.: 10/044,441

Case No.: 57287US002

Amendments to the Claims:

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously presented) A system for determining the efficacy of a sterilization process and communicating that determination to a remote location, the system comprising:

a sterilization sensor comprising an indicator that undergoes an optical change when exposed to an efficacious sterilization process;

a reader adapted to receive the sterilization sensor, the reader comprising

an illumination source for illuminating the sterilization sensor,

a first color sensor for evaluating the condition of the illuminated sterilization sensor,

an interpretation circuit for interpreting the output of the color sensor to determine whether the optical change has taken place,

a communication circuit for communicating data from the interpretation circuit to the remote location; and

the reader adapted for inclusion within packs of goods to be sterilized and capable of withstanding sterilizing conditions multiple times and through multiple uses.

2. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the sterilization sensor is disposable and the reader is reusable.

3. (original) The system according to claim 1 further comprising an interrogator for commanding the reader to communicate data from the interpretation circuit.

4. (original) The system according to claim 1 further comprising a second color sensor for evaluating the condition of the illuminated sterilization sensor, wherein the interpretation circuit interprets the output of the first color sensor and the second color sensor to determine whether the optical change has taken place.

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5. (original) The system according to claim 1 wherein the reader has at least one tortuous path adapted for conveying gas to the sterilization sensor.

6. (Currently amended) A method of determining the efficacy of the sterilization process, comprising the steps of:

providing a sterilization sensor comprising an indicator that undergoes an optical change when exposed to an efficacious sterilization process;

providing a reader, comprising:

- (a) an illumination source for illuminating the sterilization sensor,
- (b) a color sensor for evaluating the condition of the illuminated sterilization sensor,
- (c) an interpretation circuit for interpreting the output of the color sensor to determine whether the optical change has taken place, and
- (d) a communication circuit for communicating data from the interpretation circuit to a location outside of the package;

placing the sterilization sensor within a the reader, the reader adapted for inclusion within packs of goods to be sterilized and having chemical resistance capable of withstanding sterilizing conditions multiple times and through multiple uses;

placing the reader with the sterilization sensor inside a package of goods;

subjecting the package to sterilizing conditions; and

interrogating the reader without opening the package to learn whether the optical change has taken place.

7. (cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7 6 wherein the sterilization sensor is disposable and the reader is reusable.